

National Survey of Student Engagement

First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions

First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions Topical Module (2025)

Copyright © 2025 Trustees of Indiana University

This module includes two distinct sets of items: one for first-year students and one for seniors, based on institution-reported class level. The first-year questions ask students to report on academic support, goals, and institutional commitment. The senior items explore confidence in skill development, post-graduation plans, and student loan debt.

First-Year Experiences

1. During the current school year, how often were you successful:

Response options: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Never

- a. Learning course material
- b. Managing your time
- c. Getting help with schoolwork
- d. Interacting with faculty
- e. Interacting with peers

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Response options: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- a. I am clear in what I want to major in.
- b. I am clear about my career goals.
- c. I am clear about who I want to become.

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Response options: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- a. At least one instructor or staff member is genuinely interested in me as a person.
- b. At least one of my peers or classmates is genuinely interested in me as a person.
- c. My instructors support my learning.

- d. Other students support my learning.
- e. My instructors are open to my ideas and contributions to class discussions.
- f. Other students are open to my ideas and contributions to class discussions.
- g. There are students at my institution with backgrounds, identities, and cultures similar to mine.
- h. There are students at my institution with interests similar to mine.

4. During the current school year, how often have you sought support from the following?

Response options: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never, N/A

- a. Faculty members, academic advisors, or learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)
- b. Student support services (residence life staff, success coaches, peer mentors, etc.)
- c. Counseling/health center
- d. Career services office
- e. Financial Aid office
- f. Your cultural community (identity-based, faith-based, hometown group, etc.)

5. During the current school year, did you take a course or seminar for first-year students?

Response options: Yes, No, Unsure

5a. [If answered "Yes"] What topics did this course cover? (Select all that apply.)

- Additional orientation information relevant to your campus
- College success skills (study skills, time management, communication skills, reading skills, goal setting, etc.)
- Specialized academic content related to your major
- A specialized theme or academic content that emphasizes discussion

6. During the current school year, have you seriously considered leaving this institution?

Response options: No, Yes

6a. [If answered "Yes"] Why did you consider leaving? (Select all that apply.)

Response options: Personal reasons (family issues, physical or mental health, homesickness, stress, etc.), Academics (major not offered, academic difficulty, course availability, advising, etc.), Financial concerns, Job or military service, Difficulty managing demands of school and other personal obligations, Not enough opportunities to socialize and have fun, Experiences with faculty and staff, Experiences with other students, Experiences of discrimination, Campus climate or culture, Institution's location, Personal safety, Feeling that you don't fit in or belong at your institution, Educational materials or campus space are inaccessible, College just doesn't seem worth it, A reason not listed above, please specify: [text box]

7. What has most helped you succeed at this institution? [text box]

Senior Transitions

1. How much confidence do you have in your ability to complete tasks requiring the following skills and abilities?

Response options: Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little

- a. Critical thinking and analysis of arguments and information
- b. Creative thinking and problem solving
- c. Research skills
- d. Clear writing
- e. Communication for specific audiences or purposes
- f. Leadership skills
- g. Technological skills
- h. Financial and business management skills
- i. Networking and relationship building

2. To what extent has your coursework in your major(s) emphasized the following?

Response options: Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much

- a. Generating new ideas or brainstorming
- b. Taking risks in your coursework without fear of penalty
- c. Evaluating multiple approaches to a problem
- d. Inventing new methods to arrive at unconventional solutions

3. Which of the following types of honors have achieved or are you currently participating in at your institution? (Select all that apply.)

Response options: Dean's List or other recognition for high GPA, Honors program with a special honors curriculum or honors program/college completion requirements, Honors track in your major or department, Collegiate honor society specific to your major or discipline, Collegiate honor society for leadership or general academic achievement outside of your major or discipline (Mortar Board, Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, etc.), Other, please specify: [text box], You have not been involved in or received any of these

4. Do you expect to graduate this spring or summer?

Response options: Yes, No

5. After graduation, what best describes your immediate plans?

Response options: Full-time employment, Part-time employment, Graduate or professional school, Continuing undergraduate education (second major, minor, pre-requisites, etc.), Pursue a vocational degree/AA, Internship (paid or unpaid), Start my own business or self-employment, Military service, Service or volunteer activity (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Teach for America, etc.), Caregiver for family and/or others, Travel, Unsure, Other, please specify: [text box]

6. Do you already have a job for after graduation?

Response options: No, you are still searching; Yes, you will start a new job; Yes, you will continue in my current job

7. To what extent have courses in your major(s) prepared you for your post-graduation plans?

Response options: Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much

8. How closely related are your post-graduate plans to your major(s)?

Response options: Not at all, Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much

9. Do you plan to be self-employed, an independent contractor, or a freelance worker, or start your own business someday?

Response options: Yes, No, Unsure

10. Do you plan to start your own business (nonprofit or for-profit) someday?

Response options: Yes, No, Unsure

11. How much loan debt will you graduate with after completing your undergraduate degree(s)?

Response options: None, \$10,000 or less, \$10,001 to \$20,000, \$20,001 to \$30,000, \$30,001 to \$40,000, \$40,001 to \$50,000, \$50,001 to \$60,000, More than \$60,000, I have loan debt but don't know the amount, I prefer not to respond

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Response options: Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

- a. Considering the *total cost* of my undergraduate education, attending my institution was a good investment.
- b. My post-graduation plans and decisions have been impacted by student loan debt.
- c. I worry about making enough money to cover my cost of living (including any student loan payments) after graduation.
- d. I have experienced difficulty in paying for my college or university expenses.

13. If you could start over again, would you:

Response options: Definitely, Probably yes, Probably no, Definitely no

a. Choose a different major (or field)?

b. Pursue a bachelor's degree?

c. Pursue any postsecondary education (including community college, associates degrees, certificate programs)?